



Indian and Northern Affairs Canada

Statement on the 4th annual Sisters in Spirit vigil

2-3273

Ottawa, Ontario (October 4, 2009) - The following statement was released today by the Honourable Rob Nicholson, Minister of Justice, the Honourable Chuck Strahl, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, the Honourable Peter Van Loan, Minister of Public Safety and the Honourable Helena Guergis, Minister of State (Status of Women), on the occasion of the 4th annual Sisters in Spirit vigil:

"On the occasion of this fourth annual Sisters in Spirit vigil, the Government of Canada reiterates its commitment to protecting and advancing the equality of Aboriginal women and girls.

Today, Canadians from across the country will gather to honour the lives of the many Aboriginal women and girls who are missing, and offer support to their families who bear the terrible burden of grief. As a nation, we cannot stand by while over five hundred Aboriginal mothers, sisters, daughters, and aunties have been taken so violently from us.

Ending this type of violence and bringing to justice those who have committed crimes is a shared responsibility of all levels of government as well as law enforcement agencies, the justice system, and civil society. We will continue to work together with Aboriginal organizations, provinces and territories, to protect the rights, freedoms and safety of Aboriginal women and girls.

We also wish to commend the Native Women's Association of Canada for the work they have done through their Sisters in Spirit initiative. Through its tireless work, NWAC has contributed to our understanding of the extent and nature of violence against Aboriginal women and girls. Together, we have undertaken activities aimed at verifying the actual number of missing and murdered women, understanding the root causes of racially and sexually based violence.

We urge all Canadians to take a moment today to reflect on this grave injustice and the ways we can collectively fight against it. Together, we can make a difference and put an end to the violence against Aboriginal women and girls."

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